

House Resolution 145 - Introduced

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H.R. _____ S.R. _____

1 1 HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. ____
1 2 BY PETERSEN
1 3 A Resolution in recognition of the life and work of
1 4 Dr. Kenneth Jernigan and the Iowa Department for the
1 5 Blind.
1 6 WHEREAS, the Iowa Commission for the Blind was
1 7 established by the Iowa General Assembly in 1925 to
1 8 rehabilitate blind Iowans; and
1 9 WHEREAS, 50 years ago, Dr. Jernigan, a young, blind
1 10 Californian and a known civil rights leader, came to
1 11 Iowa to head the commission, then ranking last among
1 12 the states in its work for the blind; and
1 13 WHEREAS, as Director of the Commission, Dr.
1 14 Jernigan wrote to the Governor and the Members of the
1 15 General Assembly, "With only a little more money and
1 16 with energetic leadership at the Commission the
1 17 situation can very soon be quite different from what
1 18 it is today. The present Director believes that he
1 19 can provide such leadership and is willing to stake
1 20 his entire career on that belief . . . "; and
1 21 WHEREAS, under Dr. Jernigan's bold and dynamic
1 22 leadership, the Governor and General Assembly
1 23 responded enthusiastically and within 10 years Iowa
1 24 had moved from the worst to the best in providing
1 25 state services for the blind; and
1 26 WHEREAS, two statistics demonstrate the remarkable
1 27 level of progress == in 1958 10 blind persons were
1 28 rehabilitated and in 1968 the number was 10 times that
1 29 many, and when Dr. Jernigan first came to Iowa, four
1 30 blind Iowans were in college and 10 years later nearly
2 1 100 were engaged in higher education; and
2 2 WHEREAS, since 1958, the "Iowa cane" has served as
2 3 the symbol of independence for blind Americans, and
2 4 Dr. Jernigan's Iowa Commission for the Blind, now the
2 5 Iowa Department for the Blind, has served as the model
2 6 for other states to emulate, and life for blind people
2 7 in America has been changed and improved exponentially
2 8 and forever, with the "Iowa model" followed in such
2 9 states as New York, New Mexico, Nebraska, Texas, South
2 10 Carolina, Idaho, and Florida, with blind people in
2 11 those states empowered routinely as they have been in
2 12 Iowa since 1958; and
2 13 WHEREAS, in 1968, Dr. Jernigan received a
2 14 presidential citation from President Lyndon Johnson in
2 15 recognition of the tremendous success of the Iowa
2 16 program; and
2 17 WHEREAS, Dr. Jernigan passed away on October 12,
2 18 1998, after reforming services for the blind in Iowa
2 19 and after leading the civil rights movement for the
2 20 blind in America for more than half a century; NOW
2 21 THEREFORE,
2 22 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
2 23 That the House of Representatives honors the memory of
2 24 Dr. Kenneth Jernigan for the revolutionary and
2 25 pioneering work he performed for the blind of Iowa,
2 26 the nation, and the world; and
2 27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of
2 28 Representatives also commends the Iowa Department for
2 29 the Blind, and its 1958 Board Chairman, Mrs. Dorothy
2 30 Kirsner, for serving the blind of Iowa in an exemplary
3 1 manner not only by possessing the wisdom and foresight
3 2 to hire Dr. Jernigan and for following the lead of
3 3 this giant but also for carrying on his work and
3 4 legacy for the past 50 years.
3 5 LSB 6641HH 82
3 6 jr/rj/14